



University of Iowa

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Writing Sample

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Includes "1. A CANDLE POEM," "2. COUNTING RAIN," "3. COUNTING SEASONS," "4. THE LITTLE PINK GLASS," "5. BOATHOUSE," "6. PURPLE THE AUTUMN AFTERNOON RAIN," "7. UNTITLED," "8. A LOVE ACCOUNT," "9. YING YANG STREET," "10. EVACUATION DAYS," "11. IF YOU TURN AND LOOK," "12. BLUE RAIN," "13. SUMMER STROLL," "14. FRIENDSHIP," and "15. MONOTONY."

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VIET HUU TRAN
Pen Name : HUU VIET

1. A CANDLE POEM

Is it true that candles tend to cry at night?
Reminded of the nameless evenings
Ha Noi's New-Year's-Eve streets
The year dawdles
 but New Year is always in haste
Gardens rushing cherry blossoms
 forever calling the spring

All are done so it seems
Candles have fallen asleep
Dreams have ceased to come back knocking on the door
In solitary flowers bloom uselessly red

Suppose again you're indifferent
For me the spring is there as if it weren't there

(Translated by : Y NHI)

2. COUNTING RAIN

Dreams are yet mine
Fantasies still far from memories

The new season rain misses
Sapphire flashes following to the cot
Joy is like an unfinished card game
Night fades...

Will rain arrive from the longing place?...

(Translated by : Y NHI)

3. COUNTING SEASONS

Hiding from the autumn sitting behind a door
Crumbly counting golden autumn leaves
The sunlight's soul calls out to the South
Autumn is being so much Northern

Season-owed streets look perplexed
My distant beloved, are the streets still in you?
Who has pressed on the last note
that the scale unloads unmelodiously?

Who feels chilled in the evening in place of the fog?
Autumn strides at loss not knowing the street name

(Translated by : Y NHI)

4. THE LITTLE PINK GLASS

The little pink glass
Sings a song into halves
A sad, fragrant pillow absent of cheeks

The blossoming pomegranate in front of the gate
Bubbling rain out in the courtyard
The crimson silk cloth left out in the wind
So who has dropped it...?

So I have dropped it

The little pink glass
An azure ribbon
Falling on the withered-leaf porch

Wandering about the soul
 picks up pieces
 of the sky's pieces

(Translated by : Y NHI)

5. BOATHOUSE

Have the lamps fallen exhausted? Yet the trees have drifted into rest
Willows wave unpossessed
Suddenly the familiar hair's fragrance--orphaned

A rendezvous bar
 alone
 bitter beer
Who said the autumn is deeply in love
That I a lonesome chair

At day's end don't sweep too roughly
That love will fly astray in the cold lake breeze

(Translated by : Y NHI)

6. PURPLE THE AUTUMN AFTERNOON RAIN

Wish I were your child
Lulled into sleep in your sun-warm arms
To be unstartled on cold-orphan nights

Let the mite swarm hover the afternoon
Purple dress please don't languish
A rain drop bursts into halves, a boat floats adrift
To live is to share thirstiness evenly

(Translated by : Y NHI)

7. UNTITLED

Ephemeral dreams choked like green rice lost in black frost
Sowing predestined love late harvests but sorrows
Dampening rain, a love match wouldn't light

Regretfully losing you like losing a chance
Slipped out of hand

(Translated by : Y NHI)

8. A LOVE ACCOUNT

Please register a heart account
At Joint - stock Banks "Loving you forever"
Kind eyes
 why limit the youthful time?
Pray
 that you won't go sparkly bankrupt

(Translated by : Y NHI)

9. YING YANG STREET

Street first day. Street full-moon day
Strolling, skipping streets
Happy sad luck hapless...
You can buy if you wish

Street post-office ying yang
Street hell's bank
Hence... there are the streets
so many years?

(Translated by : Y NHI)

10. EVACUATION DAYS

Evacuation I had yet come of age
 Used to sleep in the day and weep at night
 Perhaps I was born thirsty for milk

Chewing on grandma's hidden blouse to suppress lovesickness
 Singing, swinging the afternoon autumn hammock
"You live with grandma, she has no breast
You live with daddy, he's a man"
 Upon each visit
 Often my mother discreetly wiped her tears

Growing up I joined the village children
 Learned to tend buffalo, fly kites and clip grass
 Warded off the rice-gleaning kids
 from the neighboring village
 Sun-burnt skin, auburn hair
 Who would have thought my home...the city

Ten years grandma's tomb covered with grass
 My heart still autumn still hammock swing
 I return to the evacuation site of the past
 Memories pour out playfully in alleys
 Hide-and-seek for a time at the age of ten
 The former poor landlord's home has turned into a manor
 Dollars from a distant cousin
 Emigrated to the other ocean shore

How I miss the dreamy, wandering age
 So far away is the past
 and so blue is the far away

(Translated by : Y NHI)

11. IF YOU TURN AND LOOK

Milk flowers are now here, my dear
 Returning to the roads the breeze lies gently asleep

If you turn and look
Your hair sways aside, your cheeks are the full moon

Paid off the moon but then I owe the sail
A swift bird in the drenched evening
Please stop looking at me proudly
The autumn almost slips away

If you turn and look
All but one lotus wilts in the pond
Wake up the fragrance for the dead-leaf season

And there is still a piece of my soul that
Gently shivers on the tree tip in the freezing wind

(Translated by : Y NHI)

12. BLUE RAIN

Branches wept transparent dew
Clear as deep skies of blue
Rain sauntered through alleys
In drops fallen anew

Dreams parted your fragrant lips
Your hidden scent quivered
Bashfully the rain unclothed
Upon your hair, rivered

Innocence hastened into dusk
Reflecting face that lined
You cried no longer, yet
Your smile's sorrow disguised.

(Translated by : ANH NGUYEN)

13. SUMMER STROLL

Trees brush their branches mirrored in the streets
 Rain's ceased, the leaves turned to the sun
 Blissful, the jammed intersection

The avenue rainbowed
 Dreaming of festivities
 The train returned to the crowded station
 Whistle stifled by its smoke-filled lungs

Peaceful breezes unfurled before eyes unfettered
 Tiled roofs lined the pathway as if an allurement.

(Translated by : ANH NGUYEN)

14. FRIENDSHIP

Each of us must one day depart
 Let's treasure our time together
 Our friendship borne of hardship
 Sibling by birth though we were not
 Blood brothers, what we were

Often, each other we misjudged
 For self gains, we planned and schemed
 Sometime wish we'd never met
 Now, the grief increased in folds
 Yearnings heaped upon yearnings
 Regrets piled upon regrets!
 Penitent of missed union
 Remorseful of cruel words
 Longed for those fleeting happy days forever passed
 How short-lived the kind-hearted friends?
 Or is Hades lacked gentle spirits
 Alas, present now, then swiftly gone.

(Translated by : ANH NGUYEN)

15. MONOTONY

There were days the work seemed monotonous
The phone. Fax. Email. Tiresome.
Migraines. High blood pressure. Cankered gums.
Cigarette fumes. Playing cards. Computer games : LINE
Each day I aged a year
Selling - buying contracts –
Two goats clashing horns on a bridge
Taxes bleed
Getting sanitary rich
Is always still the hardest
To each God bestowed only one talent
Is my source our source?

“One misstep, a life-long regret”
I squandered those youthful years
Now, in threadbare cloths I greet the full moon

(Translated by : ANH NGUYEN)